

## GRADUATE STUDENT NEWSLETTER

April 26, 1999

**ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER**

This is the sixth edition of the newsletter established in the fall of 1995, which is meant to serve as a way of spreading information and encouraging interaction among graduate students, in all three of our programs (M.A. History and Philosophy of Religion, M.A. Judaic Studies, and Ph.D. Religion), and between graduate students and faculty members in the Department of Religion. This issue of the newsletter is edited by Leslie Orr and Tanisha Ramachandran.

If you find yourself misrepresented or under-represented here, I hope you will let us know. A lot of this information was gathered via e-mail. If you have an e-mail address and were not contacted, please let Leslie, Tanisha, and Tina know what your e-mail address is. And if you don't have an e-mail address, get one! And tell us what it is. Information about student and faculty activities that was published in earlier issues of the newsletter (the last newsletter appeared in the fall of 1998) is not repeated here. (You can ask Leslie for back issues, if you're interested, or find them at the Department's web site: [artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html](http://artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html)).

**THE FOURTH ANNUAL CANADIAN GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE IN RELIGION AND CULTURE**, hosted by the graduate students of Concordia's Department of Religion (YOU!), will take place all day on May 12, at the Faculty Club (7th floor, Hall building). Check out the announcement for the conference included in this mailing, and make sure to come! Please note also that in conjunction with the conference, there will be a special performance, by the group "Monacar," of Renaissance music composed by cloistered women (the North American premiere!)-the evening of May 11, 7 p.m., at the Grey Nun's Convent Chapel (1190 Guy).

**REGISTRATION-AND NEW FACES IN DIFFERENT PLACES**

With this mailing, you may be receiving a letter inviting you to meet in May with the Graduate Program Director of your program in order to discuss registration for 1999-2000. When you come in to be advised and to register, you will also have the pleasure of meeting our wonderful new Graduate Program Secretary, Tina Montandon, if you have not already done so. Tina joins Munit Merid in the office-together they are a dynamic duo who seem to have solutions for every problem. If you do not register this spring, you can do so over the summer or before classes start in the fall, but who is your new advisor? After June 1, Michael Oppenheim will take over from Norma Joseph as Graduate Program Director for the Judaic Studies M.A. program, and will share this responsibility for the History and Philosophy of Religion M.A. program with Michel Despland, while Leslie Orr becomes Department Chair. (Leslie and Michael switch offices.) Fred Bird will continue as the Graduate Program Director for the Ph.D. program.

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION WEB SITE: [artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html](http://artsci-ccwin.concordia.ca/religion/reli.html)**

Munit Merid is in the process of rebuilding our web site. If you have any ideas about graphics or content, or suggestions about what would be useful or interesting, contact Munit and/or Leslie.

## RESOURCES/ ANNOUNCEMENTS

### THE INSTITUTE FOR CANADIAN JEWISH STUDIES AT CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY.

The Department of Religion has almost completed its search for a Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, who will teach in the Department and serve as the head of the Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies. The brochure for the Chair is almost finished, and the web site is up and running. Deidre Butler manages the site and will be completing the first publication series this summer. In February, the Institute celebrated the first five winners of the Fellowship in Canadian Jewish Studies. The recipients were: Marlene Bonneau, Sharon Gubbay Helfer, Sonia Zylberberg, Ever Lerner, and Yvonne Hart. This year's winners will be announced shortly. The Institute has also received funding for a new Jewish Studies graduate student scholarship that will be awarded in the year 2001.

### THE MONTREAL AREA INTER-UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GROUP IN INDIAN STUDIES

The Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute has provided seed money for the development of a framework for collaboration among students and faculty at the four Montreal area universities who are involved in studying and researching topics in the area of India Studies. This is an interdisciplinary group, representing a wide range of interests. Plans are now being made for a series of colloquia for next year. An electronic mailing list is being built up, to publicize the activities of this group, as well as other relevant events and opportunities. If you would like to be put on the mailing list, contact Jean Francois Belzile at UQAM ([belzile@CAM.ORG](mailto:belzile@CAM.ORG)). If you want more information or have some ideas about how this group might be developed, contact Leslie Orr.

News from the President of THE GRADUATE RELIGION STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION, Johanne Rabbat:

- As promised, I donated the t-shirts from the previous grad student conference to some needy individuals from a high school which has a program in place to help students from families with limited financial resources.
- Howard Gontovnick should be congratulated for the excellent work he does in preparing the electronic discussion group, and those who aren't signed up and want to be should know about it. [Look below under Graduate Student Activities for information about how to subscribe].
- It should be made known that TA's are working to form a union. A lot more can be said about that but no time at the moment!

Announcements from Deidre Butler:

THE JOURNAL OF RELIGION AND CULTURE was edited by Deidre Butler and Sonia Zylberberg this year. As usual, our most recent volume is coming out painfully late, but will be available at the Graduate Student Conference on May 12. We're very proud of this Journal as it includes innovative papers from the Concordia graduate student community as well as papers from graduate students from across Canada. We have also expanded the book review section, including reviews by students and faculty from Montreal universities. Barbara Davy, Donna Goodman and Nathalie Pilon have expressed interest in working on the next issue of the Journal. We hope that religion grad students will continue to support the Journal by submitting papers and book reviews. Anyone interested in working on the Journal or contributing should contact Deidre Butler by email at [Deidre@inforoute.net](mailto:Deidre@inforoute.net) or by phone at 514-426-2815

IMPLICATIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS: INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN RELIGION AND CULTURE: THE 4TH ANNUAL GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCE will be held May 12, 1999 in the faculty club in the Hall Building starting at 8:30 a.m. Deidre Butler, Rose Ftaya and Maria Mamfredis have been working on this conference since the fall. We're really excited about this conference! Over 40 papers by graduate students from across Canada will be presented in three concurrent sessions throughout the day. We're very pleased to include more multidisciplinary presentations, including film, art and music. We will be having our reception in the Faculty club following the conference. As always, there is no registration fee for the conference. There will also be a book fair in the foyer of the conference with book tables by new and used book sellers. There will be a concert held in conjunction with the conference on the evening before (May 11) at the Grey Nun's chapel on Guy. This concert will include performances of cloistered women's music from the Renaissance. If you want to work on the conference next year, speak to Deidre, Rose or Maria. We hope that all graduate and undergraduate students, faculty and the community will join us for this one day conference. We are thinking of turning the conference into a 2 day event -what do you think? After the conference, please give feedback and advice to us so that we can continue to improve!

A big thank you to Laurel Fischtein for her fundraising efforts this year. Laurel has miraculously found funding for the Conference and Journal through her hard work and perseverance. We could not have proceeded with either project without her work! Another big thank you to the Department of Religion. The Department has donated a substantial amount to the Journal and the Conference. This funding has allowed us to enlarge this year's conference, print the Journal and has assured the continuation of these projects at least until next year!

#### FELLOWSHIPS

For information about fellowships, and other opportunities, keep your eye on the bulletin boards in the department. You should also check Concordia's on-line catalogue of Graduate Awards: [http://www.concordia.ca/academic\\_info/general\\_academic\\_info/ga.html](http://www.concordia.ca/academic_info/general_academic_info/ga.html) If you don't have access to this via the internet, you can consult the hard copy at the Graduate Awards office, in the School of Graduate Studies.

Most fellowship competitions take place in the fall, but the deadline for applying for Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute India Studies fellowships, for study in India in 2000-2001, is June 30, 1999. Shastri Graduate Student India Studies Fellowships may be used to do research, to undergo language training, or to acquire a graduate degree from an Indian university. Also of potential interest are the Arts Fellowships, for junior or senior artists who (1) are practitioners of an Indian art form and wish to undergo training or engage in related activity in India to improve their skills or expand their repertoire, or (2) are not practitioners of such an art form but wish to learn from the practice of such a form in India to develop their own work in new, interesting and creative ways. Information and applications for India Studies fellowships are available from the Shastri Calgary office (403 220-7467; [sici@acs.ucalgary.ca](mailto:sici@acs.ucalgary.ca)).

#### NEWS FROM CURRENT AND FORMER GRADUATE PROGRAM SECRETARIES:

Tina Montandon would like to draw your attention to the refurbishing of the Department that is going on—fresh paint is going up everywhere. Ideas and opinions about the colour scheme are welcome. (We hope you like yellow.)

Diane Boulé (now assistant to Vice-Dean Dennis Murphy) is pleased to announce the birth of her first grandchild, a beautiful boy named Kai Derry White, on February 10!

**SCHOLARLY SOCIETIES.** Student memberships in scholarly societies are often relatively inexpensive, and offer many benefits—including subscriptions to scholarly journals, news about upcoming conferences and other professional matters, and a means of staying in touch with the most recent scholarship in the study of religion. The three societies listed below are all hosting conferences this spring in which graduate students are presenting papers. Join up and participate! The American Academy of Religion (AAR)—write to Membership Services, Scholar's Press, PO Box 15399, Atlanta GA 30333-0399

The Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR)—membership secretary, Dr. Brian Aitken, Huntington College, Laurentian Univ, Ramsey Lake Road, Sudbury, Ontario P3E 2C6

La Société Québécoise pour l'Etude de la Religion (SQER)—write to M. Benoit-Luc Simard, Faculté de théologie et de sciences religieuses, Pavillon F.A.S., 8e étage, C.P. 45, Université Laval, Sainte-Foy, Québec G1K 7P4 (aah908@agora.ulaval.ca)

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**At the Cutting Edge of Jewish Studies: The Most Recent Developments in the Field,** Thirtieth Anniversary Conference, Dept. of Jewish Studies, McGill University, May 9-10 in Leacock 232 at McGill. Panels on Modern Jewish Literature, Jewish Thought, Jewish Education, Jewish History, and Biblical Studies, with a major address by Paula Hyman, Yale University, on "Gender and Jewish Studies: Reshaping a Field." The conference is free for students, but only with advance registration. For information phone 398-3905 or visit the website <http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/programs/jewish/>

**Fourth Annual Canadian Graduate Student Conference in Religion and Culture,** sponsored by the graduate students of Concordia's Department of Religion, May 12 in the Faculty Club (7th floor, Hall building), Concordia University. Registration is free. For more information, see elsewhere in this newsletter

**Le colloque de la Société québécoise pour l'étude de la religion à l'ACFAS,** May 10-13, at the University of Ottawa. For general information on the ACFAS conference (the francophone equivalent to the meeting of the Learned Societies, now known as the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities) visit the website <http://www.acfas.ca/congres>

**The Canadian Society for the Study of Religion (CSSR)** conference at the meeting of the Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities, June 4-6, Bishop's University, Lennoxville. For general information on the Congress, go to <http://www.hssfc.ca/cog/CongressInfoEng.html>

**The Association for Canadian Jewish Studies** conference, June 6 in Montreal at the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue, June 7 in Lennoxville at Bishop's University.

**The Canadian Asian Studies Association/ South Asia Council Annual Meeting,** June 10-11, at UQAM

## **GRADUATE STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

### **GRADUATIONS**

At the 1999 spring convocation, M.A. degrees will be awarded to Kim Lightbody (History and Philosophy of Religion) and to Paulana Layman (Judaic Studies).



## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Congratulations to those who were successful in winning fellowships! The following students have recently been awarded support for their graduate studies:

Shauna Beharry was awarded FCAR, SSHRC and McConnell Memorial Graduate fellowships

Marlene Bonneau received a Canadian Jewish Studies Fellowship

Deidre Butler's SSHRC fellowship was renewed for 1999-2000

Russ Daye's Concordia University Graduate fellowship was renewed for 1999-2000, and he was also awarded both FCAR and SSHRC fellowships

Sharon Gubbay Helfer's FCAR fellowship was renewed for 1999-2000, and she also received a Canadian Jewish Studies Fellowship

Johanne Rabbat's FCAR fellowship was renewed for 1999-2000

Carla Salvati's FCAR fellowship was renewed for 1999-2000

Sonia Zylberberg was awarded a Canadian Jewish Studies Fellowship

## OTHER ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

What follows consists almost entirely of reports that you have made about yourselves. Many of these were submitted to me (Leslie) by e-mail (orr@vax2.concordia.ca or, even better, basset@total.net). If you don't find yourself below, or if you want to elaborate on or update what you see about yourself below, please get in touch with me—right away or over the summer, so that your report of your activities can go into the next newsletter, to appear in late August. You can, of course, submit hard copy, as well as e-copy. Just do it.

Soumela Amanatidis (M.A. H&P): I was teaching in the last year, English as a Second Language at an elementary level. I have also been involved in an organization that gave me an opportunity to meet scholars from around the world who have written on themes similar to the one I'm interested in pursuing: Pontian Hellenes in Asia Minor.

Gordon Aronoff (M.A. H&P): I've been researching the origins of Liberalism and European Nationalism/the Zionist movement, as my MA thesis will examine some aspect of the tension between the notion of a "democratic" and a "Jewish" State in present-day Israel. I'm also working on an article with Avery Plaw, a PhD student at McGill in Political Theory, consisting of a Communitarian/Christian critique of Rawls' "Political Liberalism". I've also been volunteering at the Montreal Jewish Community Centre a couple of times a week teaching English to newly-arrived immigrants.

John Arsenault (Ph.D.): For the most part, I will be working on my thesis "Shaping Realities: The Moral Dimension of Imitatio Dei in Jewish and Christian Mysticism." I am almost finished the first chapter "The Nature and Scope of Mysticism: Unification or Transformation", a title that could change to reflect the more dominant issues in it. I have just completed a paper intended for publication titled "Authority, Autonomy, and Antinomianism: The Mystical and Ethical Piety of Marguerite Porete in 'The Mirror of Simple Souls'."

Chris Austin (M.A. H&P): I am preparing for my comprehensive exam in Hinduism, researching Samurai and Zen, and preparing to record a CD in the summer. I am the drummer in a jazz fusion trio (the guitarist is Steven Rose, an M.A. student in the philosophy department at Concordia) and we hope to write a few more pieces and begin recording in late May/June, depending on when Steve defends his thesis. Unfortunately we only rehearse once a week as we are all pretty busy. We don't have a name yet!

Abi Bahar (Ph.D.) continues to offer courses at Dawson College. He has recently taught courses on "Educating Young Children," "Interpersonal Knowledge," and "Ethics and Ethnic Relations."

Marlene Bonneau (Ph.D.): I hope to complete my last comprehensive exam by the end of June and focus on the writing of my thesis in the summer of 1999, and complete it by the end of this year. I am also hoping to travel to India and Southeast Asia at the end of this year to visit Chiangmai, Angkor Wat, and Ajanta to further my research in Southeast Asian iconography. Currently my main interest, besides thesis work, is tracing the life story of Anna Leonowens of the famed "King and I"—from Singapore, Penang, Bangkok, and Halifax, to Montreal where she is buried. Last June I attended the York University "Heritage in Transition" Conference and presented a paper on "Jewish Denominationalism in Montreal: Seen through Wedding Rituals." This year I will be making a presentation at the CSSR Annual Meeting in June on "Multi-media Approaches in the Study and Teaching of Religion and Philosophy" and am presenting a paper at Concordia's Graduate Student Conference entitled "Jewish Wedding Rings: Transmission of Culture." My work continues to move towards the understanding of religious iconography and how ritual objects contribute to religious traditions.

Deidre Butler (Ph.D.): I am completing my 2nd year of the Ph.D in religion: comparative ethics program. My dissertation is on Emmanuel Levinas' ethics, using a critique of his thought to develop new feminist ethics. I am beginning my comprehensive exams in Women & Religion, Holocaust and Modern Jewish Ethics. I have presented at a few conferences this year: Face to Face, a conference on Levinas in Ohio, the AAR-EIR in Geneva, NY and the Heritage in Transition, Canadian Jewish studies conference at York. At the AAR-EIR meeting, I was elected to the AAR-EIR regional board, after being nominated as a graduate student representative by Ruth Mas, a former M.A. student of the department. I am contributing articles to the Reader's Guide to Judaism, coming out this summer, on "Modern Jewish Philosophy," "Modern Jewish History" and "Jewish History by Modern Authors." This summer I will be a fellow of the Holocaust Institute at Northwestern University in Chicago. I've been working as the Assistant to the Chair of Canadian Jewish Studies for the second year. Together with Sonia Zylberberg, I am Editor of the Journal of Religion and Culture. I have been coordinating the 4th Annual Graduate Student Conference in Religion and Culture with Rose Ftaya and Maria Mamfredis. I've also been working at Temple Emanuel-Beth Shalom teaching adult learning classes and presenting sermons at Shabbat services. I'm continuing to work as a freelance graphic designer and copywriter. Last but not least, I was married in Vermont on November 28 to Martin Landry, my best friend for the past 9 years.

Josee Campion (M.A. H&P) will be presenting a paper at the May 12th Graduate Student Conference entitled "L'évolution de la figure de la sorcière dans l'histoire du cinéma américain."

Louis Chauvin (Ph.D.): I teach at the Faculty of Management on a lecturer contract: Ethics in Management (MBA and BCom). I have been teaching Strategies for Sustainable Development (MBA and BCom) for the past few years but as of September I will be coordinating and teaching a few sections of a new core course called The Social Context of Business (a sorely needed perspective in this faculty :)). I'm living in the ghetto a few minutes walk from work and it's a great change from the bridge hassle everyday. The summer will be spent working on my thesis and I plan on having at least a first draft by the end of the summer.

Barb Davy (Ph.D.): I will be celebrating my first wedding anniversary in the beginning of May. We don't have kids yet, but we've been trying out the responsibility thing with our two cats,

Milo and Phoebe. I will be delivering a paper titled "Sovereignty and Belonging: Narratives of Selves with Others" at the graduate student's conference. I will be attending several conferences this summer, if my finances hold out, including a section on shamanism at CASCA (Canadian Anthropological Society) in Quebec city, a Women's Spirituality conference in Sudbury, and the CSSR meetings at the Congress in Sherbrooke. I will be delivering a paper to the Person, Culture and Religion group at the AAR in November, and also another titled "The Meanings of Nature" at an unofficial meeting at the AAR of the Nature Religion Scholars Network. I'm looking forward to studying shamanic traditions with Marie-Francoise Guedon at the University of Ottawa, and spending a lot of time in my garden this summer.

Russ Daye (Ph.D.): Fiona and I were married last August. The ceremony was performed in a tiny little country church near the farm where Fiona grew up. Throughout last Fall and this Winter, I was teaching at the United and Anglican theological colleges at McGill. Doing this along with teaching at Concordia and doing the doctoral seminar made for an exciting but demanding schedule. This summer I plan to take it pretty easy. Fiona and I will spend a month or so in the Maritimes, and the only work I plan to do is to read in preparation for my Buddhism comp. In the Fall, I'll be working on my dissertation in preparation for a trip to South Africa to gather data. The trip should begin in January and last 3 to 4 months. While there, I'll also be doing research for this big project on multinationals in the developing world that Fred is heading. On the bragging front, I received a small scholarship, called the McLeod Scholarship, this Spring. It's for United Church leaders who go on to further study. [Russ also received some other fellowships—see above—and was awarded support for travel to the Third Annual Peacebuilding Consultations, March 2-3 in Ottawa, consisting of a review of government and NGO peacebuilding initiatives, and discussion of research possibilities in peacebuilding between the Canadian government, the academic and NGO communities.]

Michelle Folk (M.A. H&P): All I have been doing related to school is reading, reading, and more reading. In terms of a job, I work in a job share a couple of days a week as a Program Specialist in the Community Services Department of the City of Regina. I'm at the Fieldhouse, which is an indoor track, tennis, and badminton facility connected to one of our pools. My only sort of big news is that I am getting married June 4.

Rose Ftaya (M.A. Judaic Studies): I'm working (with Ira) as undergraduate advisor for the department, a job which fits me nicely and which I enjoy very much. I'm also putting a lot of time into the graduate conference. It looks like it's gonna be real swish this year. A new dog has moved in with me. And I've temporarily suspended my work as a cabinet maker while I look for new studio space.

Howard Gontovnick (M.A. H&P): I publish an electronic newsletter every month (via e-mail) focused on the study of religious traditions [to subscribe, contact Howard at [howardg@cam.org](mailto:howardg@cam.org)] and I am continuing to develop a web site which contains important information related to religious studies: [www.cam.org/~howardg/religion.html](http://www.cam.org/~howardg/religion.html). I have also developed and maintain an internet site on Alvin Mahrer's Experiential Psychotherapy. I lecture and teach on how to be your own psychotherapist—a method that I am working on with Dr. Mahrer. A monograph has been planned and will be written for publication next year. Recently, I have had articles published in Perspective (Association for Humanistic Psychology) (August 1998), Cognica (Canadian Guidance and Counseling Association) (Jan 1999), and the Journal of the Canadian Association for Jewish Studies (forthcoming). I will be presenting a number of conference papers in 1999, concerning themes related to the psychology of religion, Canadian



Jewish studies, and Buddhism; these will be presented at the Eastern International Regional meeting of the AAR, Concordia's Graduate Student Conference, the Canadian Association for Jewish Studies, the Conference on Teaching Buddhism, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion.

Catherine Grimanis (M.A. H&P): I am winding down the school year at Kells Academy and preparing my high school students for their June exams. I am in the process of preparing a short talk on Women in the (Eastern) Orthodox Church, to be given at the Sign of the Theotokos Church in Westmount on May 16th. I will be leaving for Greece on June 26th and spending the summer there!

Sharon Gubbay Helfer (Ph.D.): My longstanding interest in painting, drawing, and dance has inspired me to take painting in Concordia's fine arts department this year. My current academic work involves me with the themes of time, memory, history, story, identity. For my Ph.D. thesis, I am planning a study of the Reconstructionist Synagogue of Montréal and its setting in the political/social/linguistic context of Québec. Something rather fun: I have been accepted to participate in the American Academy for Jewish Research Graduate Student Seminar at Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, from June 6-11 (room and board provided). The seminar will be conducted by Prof. Michael A. Meyer, Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Jewish History at HUC-JIR, Prof. Louis Feldman of Yeshiva University and Prof. Elliot Wolfson of New York University, and will focus on changing parameters of Jewish identity.

Carlton Harvey (Ph.D.): I was the guest preacher for a church camp near Meaford, ON last July. I continue to serve on the Board of Governors of Canadian Nazarene College in Calgary, AB, having served as secretary of the board for four years and was re-elected for another one year term. I was commissioned by the National Board of the Church of the Nazarene Canada to do a nation-wide study on the grass-roots understanding of the Wesleyan doctrine of holiness within Canadian Nazarene churches. The results of my field work were given in a paper I presented to the National Board in January in Vancouver, BC. I am the Executive Editor of a book to be published in 2002 on the history of the Church of the Nazarene in Canada. I am coordinating a team of 12 writers and an editorial committee. The title of the book will be: "Love Does That." I was the guest preacher for a missions conference in Bloomsburg, PA in April. I expect to write my final written comprehensive exam on May 6, the topic to be "Renewal in Religious Organizations." Pending successful completion of that exam and the orals soon to follow, I am hoping to be admitted to candidacy by June and begin working on my thesis. And one final thing: I'm looking forward to the Religion Department conference on May 12 and my role as moderator of one of the sessions!

Christopher Helland (M.A. H&P): I've had a very busy and productive year. I will be writing my last comp near the end of April and defending my thesis and doing the oral defense for the comps in mid May. I have been accepted to present a paper at an international conference on religion and science May 2-4 in Columbus, Ohio on "Religion and Science: Tension, Accommodation and Engagement." My session is on Science and Global Religions, and the title of my paper is "New Technology within New Religions: Pushing the Paradigms of Traditional Religion and Science." I applied to several graduate schools in the U.S. and Canada for my doctoral studies. It came down to a difficult decision between Rice University in Houston, Texas and the University of Toronto. Rice University offered full payment of tuition, a stipend for four years, and also gave me the award of Dean of Humanities Fellow for 1999. The University of Toronto offered me a full Doctoral Fellowship for four years. Based on the differences between



the two programs, I have decided to do my Ph.D. at the University of Toronto. I will be continuing my research in the incorporation of science within the belief system of new religious movements and look forward to undertaking this endeavor.

Jessica Kaufman (M.A. H&P) will be presenting a paper at the Graduate Students Conference entitled "Worshipping the Virgin: Contemporary Images of Mary from Dollar Stores to Cathedrals." She will be in Montreal this summer, working on her comprehensive exam in Judaism, and looks forward to starting work next spring on her thesis, which will concern ritual theory and new religious movements.

Julie Lafford (M.A. H&P): No work is being done on my thesis as of now, but I am doing some interesting work on Christian jewelry that I will be presenting at the Grad student conference in May. Another project that I am interested in pursuing is to look at the Philippino community's veneration of the Infant of Prague in Charlottetown, PEI, my hometown.

Elizabeth Lamont (M.A. H&P): Academically, there's the "Jain Women" paper-haven't got a catchy title yet-that I'm working on. After completing this project this summer I am looking forward to finishing my MA. Work wise, I'm writing an article (for a library journal) on "Issues and Strategic Planning for the Merging of the Medical Libraries of The McGill University Health Centre (MUHC)."

Steven Lapidus (M.A. H&P): Academically, I'm trying to finish up my MA this year, writing a thesis on a personal document on pre-WWI Jewish life in a Ukrainian shtetl written by my grandfather. I've been trying to corroborate his account with whatever little external documentation I can find, as well as to investigate the fate of those townspeople who didn't leave the shtetl before WWII, since there is very little direct historical documentation. I am also waiting for information from my great-aunt who was one of the only family members to have witnessed both the pre-war life in the shtetl as well as the Holocaust years. As well, I'm a tour guide at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre, which is another of my academic interests. I have been invited to sit on the executive board of a local Holocaust research organization, which I'm quite excited about. My day job is as a data analyst in a psychology lab here at Concordia, in the area of aging. I have been here for many years, and all of my academic publications (not that there are that many of them!) have been in collaboration with people here in the area of aging. My aspirations, after finishing my MA and while doing my PhD, are to teach, probably at the CEGEP level, and eventually at the university level, once the PhD is done.

Kim Lightbody (M.A. H&P): I have completed my requirements for my MA and I am currently looking forward to Convocation ;) I am Gainfully employed in the Telecommunications industry as an Engineering Operations & Project Manager. This job has provided me the time and income to travel, my most recent trip was to Tunisia, the next will be to Turkey. (I am currently working on a book about Religious sites of worship, incorporating my personal travel experience as well as 'intro' to the study of religion which will include my own photographic work.) I am married, I have 2 cats, 1 Bird and a younger brother living with me in the house that we bought 2 years ago.

Ethan Lipton (M.A. H&P): I might be teaching a course for a Jewish group this summer, at the Worker's circle, on the evolution of Jewish history. I am finishing my Buddhism comprehensive in the fall semester-and also finishing my Master's degree. Further, I will be writing a book of humorous experiences which I have encountered in my life.

Maria Mamfredis (Ph.D.): I am presently in the process of marking the final exams for RELI 213 (part 2) which I taught in the winter term. I will be teaching this same course in the

summer. I am one of the organizers (along with Deidre and Rose) of the Grad Students Interdisciplinary Conference. I will be presenting a paper at that conference as well as one at the the CSSR Annual Meeting in June. I also presented a paper last fall at the SSSR when it met in Montreal. Finally, I plan to finish the first draft of my thesis by or during August.

Bruce Manson (M.A. H&P) continues his work teaching intensive English courses at McGill's Center for Continuing Education, over the summer as during the rest of the year. His students include many international students as well as French Canadians. Over the summer he will be doing independent reading in pursuit of his academic interests in Buddhism in China and Christianity in the Roman Empire.

Grant Martin (Ph.D.): I am about 90% complete the initial draft of my doctoral thesis. The working title is "Understanding Religious Unity and Diversity in terms of 'Non-Dualism,' 'Divine Unity,' and 'Divine Relationship' Together: A Non-Relativistic Philosophy of Religious Pluralism." I examine three different approaches to religious diversity, each of which claims to be universally valid, and each of which roots the diversity of all religions in a radically different perception of what is (ultimately) religious. I argue against the universal validity of these three approaches on the basis that each fails to understand and, therefore, rightly account for the grounding religious unity of the other two approaches. And, finally, I seek a reconciliation between the points of view of Non-Dualism, Divine Unity, and Divine Relationship on the basis of an accurate understanding of them. I will be 100% finished with this draft by the end of the summer. And during this time I will also be 1) finishing up a reading course on "Islam and Pluralism" (with Lynda); 2) taking another French course; and, 3) doing some work for Fred on his "global ethics project." Beyond the summer, my academic future is uncertain. On January 11th, 1999 my second daughter Aidan was born, and I am finally feeling somewhat recovered.

Kelly Menshick (Ph.D.) will be making a presentation at the CSSR Annual Meeting in June on "The Qumran Communit(ies) and their Self-definition as the Exiled of Israel in the War Scroll."

Nathalie Michaud (M.A. H&P) is writing on cloistered Italian women composers of the late Renaissance (as the term applies to music). As part of this research she will be presenting and performing in a concert to be held the evening before the department's graduate conference, May 11th, at seven pm, in the chapel of the convent of the Grey Nuns (behind the Faubourg - 1190 Guy). By publishing, these women assumed and desired their music to be heard beyond the convent where it could be performed with instruments and by a choir that would have included men, explaining the number of pieces scored with tenor and bass parts. This performance will include ten singers and a small wind ensemble with continuo. Afterwards there will be a Q&A reception.

David Oliver (Ph.D.): I am working on my thesis on Patterns of Enculturation in the Anglican Community. My full-time position is as Rector of St. Thomas' Church (Anglican). I also work as Ecumenical officer for the Diocese. This last fall, I ran as candidate with Jean Doré's Team Montreal in the Loyola District. I did not win, but learned from the experience.

Pat O'Rourke (Ph.D.): Since last year I have continued my work on the research ethics committees of the Royal Victoria Hospital and am also part of the group planning the future organization of Research Ethics at the McGill University Health Centre, of which the Royal Victoria Hospital is a part. I continue to work on the Clinical Ethics Committee of the hospital and give ethics and patients'rights related talks to hospital staff and, most recently, to fourth year McGill medical students. I also continue to work on the editorial side of The Rambler, a journal of

Catholic thought published by the Newman Institute. Last Fall I was invited by the Protecteur du citoyen of the Province of Quebec to participate in a panel and give a short address (in French) to le 1e colloque des ombudsmans et responsables du traitement de plaintes du secteur public. This colloque was held in honor of the 50th anniversary of the declaration of human rights. Last November I attended a conference on Complementary Medicine in the Mainstream, which brought together business leaders, health care professionals and Federal government representatives. My thesis: Ethical issues in Alternative Medicine, is now in early draft form. My two cats are collaborating on my thesis. One particularly loves to lie on the computer mouse and has managed to remove my toolbar and status bar. She gets quite snarly when I try to remove her so I do my work with my right hand under her belly and on the mouse. I now have very strong right wrist muscles. The other likes to walk across the keyboard, which has led to some creative page formatting and interesting interpolations in the text.

Nathalie Pilon (M.A. Jd.St.): I am currently starting work on my M.A. thesis on Jewish women involved in labour and union movements in Montreal in the 1st half of this century. My focus is the process of identity construction within those milieus. I'm looking at issues of gender (of course), ethnicity, class-consciousness, religious and political identities. If any one has a relative or friend who may be helpful in providing first or second hand info, who could give me access to diaries, journals, or any other resources/material, please get in touch with me through email (thalie@vax2.concordia.ca) or through the department. I would greatly appreciate it! Otherwise, I will spend the summer reading for my comprehensive exams and I will be taking a trip to London, England, to visit my father who moved there last year.

Tanisha Ramachandran (M.A. H & P) is starting to think about her thesis on "Constructions of Sexuality in the Ramayana," and is contemplating learning Sanskrit and Tamil. She was selected to participate this summer in the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute's Summer Programme in India, but unfortunately has to pass up this opportunity, and will be in Montreal this summer. She is presenting a paper at the Graduate Student Conference entitled "Constructing Sita: Deconstructing the Ideal Wife." Tanisha is part of a band that is "barely in formation at the moment. I guess the musical style is alternative with "Indian influence" (whatever that means). Basically, I steal classical Indian riffs and rewrite them into rock."

Carla Salvati (Ph.D.): Nothing too exciting in my life in the immediate future ... except I am trying to find a way to get to Italy for a few weeks this summer to research the iconography of Catherine of Siena - but nothing definite yet. My research interest is the Christian Middle Ages - in particular the cult of saints. I am particularly interested in asceticism - the medieval notion of the suffering saint's body as a site of divine power. Following a broad survey of sources, my analysis will focus on the late medieval period in Italy. I am particularly interested in examining the narrative and iconographic depictions of a climactic moment in the history of asceticism, the stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi.

Dova Tinberg (M.A. Judaic Studies): After I am done with all my school stuff and get my apartment packed up, I am going back to my home in Chicago for the summer. My plans for the summer are quite minimal at the moment, two days a week I will be a nanny with two of the most adorable children in the world - one will be 2 1/2 and the other will almost be one year old. The other two days I am probably going to be working at a store called Williams Sinoma - I guess you could call it a store for the gourmet cook in all of us so I am excited about that if it works out. Other than that - a possible trip to Los Angeles for family stuff and lots of school work to take up those extra minutes. Hopefully I will make it once or twice to Montreal to visit my boyfriend -



4 months is way too long!!! Oh, and of course I will be planning my sister's wedding shower which will take place in August sometime for her October wedding. I hope everyone has a wonderful summer!

Tarek Toni: I have postponed my studies at American University in Cairo until the summer of 2000. This summer I shall continue with language courses in Coptic and Arabic. Broadly speaking my interests are in comparative mysticism, early church, Coptic Church, monasticism, and Sufism. I have focused these interests in my proposed thesis, a comparative study on early Christian, Coptic, asceticism and Egyptian Sufism. In this study I plan to look at and compare the religion of both the Copts and the Sufis within the boundary of Egypt. I am also interested in methodological approaches to the study of religion particularly the "continental" views. I work full time as a stained glass artist to support myself, and do part time volunteer work as a "content expert" for a documentary series.

Sonia Zylberberg (Ph.D.): My interesting accomplishments of the past year include: a publication on a website, "The Voice of Iris (Lot's Wife)," in *Iris: a collaborative installation*. (<http://sweeney.ucr.edu>, Feb 1999); and the publication of a story, "Filling in the Gaps: additions to Genesis 12 - 21" in Parchment: Contemporary Canadian Jewish Writing (volume 7, Fall 1998). And I received a fellowship from the Concordia Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies that will enable me to stop my job for a while and make some progress on my doctorate! My doctoral thesis will be in the area of contemporary Jewish women's rituals, especially Rosh Hodesh (new moon) celebrations. I will do a feminist ethnographic study of various women's groups, concentrating on Montreal. At this particular moment, I am planning to focus on religious authority and ritual expertise within these rituals, but that could change.

**PUBLICATION AFTER GRADUATION.** After you write your Ph.D. thesis, what happens to it? Is this the end—or a beginning? Fred Bird and Leslie Orr have documented the following real life adventures of some of the dissertations written at Concordia's Department of Religion, and their authors:

Spencer Boudreau's 1990 thesis has been reborn as a book entitled Catholic Education and the Quebec Experience, being published this year.

Savithri de Tourreil, who completed her dissertation in 1996 on "Nayars in a South Indian Matrix: A Study Based on Female-centred Ritual," intends to make her work available on the internet.

Simcha Fishbane, who graduated in 1988, has used his Ph.D. thesis as the foundation for his Method and Meaning of the Mishnah Berurah (Ktav, 1991), and has co-edited two other volumes: Essays in the Social Scientific Study of Judaism and Jewish Society (with Stuart Schoenfeld—Ktav, 1994) and Ritual and Ethnic Identity: A Comparative Study of the Social Meaning of Liturgical Ritual in Synagogues (with Jack Lightstone and Frederick Bird—Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1995).

Marsha Hewitt's 1986 thesis has been published under the title, From Theology to Social Theory: Juan Luis Segundo and the Theology of Liberation (Peter Lang, 1990). She is also the author of Critical Theory of Religion: A Feminist Analysis (Fortress, 1995).

Pierre Hurteau's 1991 dissertation on "Homosexualité, religion et droit au Québec: Une approche historique" provided the foundation for two journal articles that appeared in 1993: "L'homosexualité masculine et les discours sur le sexe en contexte montréalais de la fin du XIXe

siècle à la Révolution tranquille" in Histoire sociale / Social History 26(51): 44-66, and "Catholic Moral Discourse on Male Sodomy and Masturbation in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" in the Journal of the History of Sexuality 4:1-26.

Bassem Khalifa's 1996 thesis was published as The Rise and Fall of Christian Lebanon (York Press, 1997).

Marc P. Lalonde (Ph.D. 1994) is publishing his thesis in revised form under the title Critical Theology and the Challenge of Jurgen Habermas: Toward a Critical Theology of Religious Insight (Peter Lang, 1999). He is also the editor of The Promise of Critical Theology: Essays in Honour of Charles Davis (Wilfrid Laurier Press, 1995).

Kenneth R. Melchin's 1983 thesis appeared as History, Ethics, and Emergent Probability: Ethics, Society and History in the Work of Bernard Lonergan. He has recently published another book entitled Living with Other People: Directions in Christian Ethics from Bernard Lonergan (Liturgical Press, 1998).

Laurence Nixon's 1990 thesis will be appearing in book form, with the title The Mystical Struggle: A Psychological Analysis.

Susan J. Palmer (Ph.D. 1992) published her dissertation under the title Moon Sisters, Krishna Mothers, Rajneesh Lovers: Women's Roles in New Religions (Syracuse University Press, 1995). She is also the author, with Arvind Sharma, of The Rajneesh Papers: Studies in a New Religious Movement (Motilal Banarsidass, 1993); the author of AIDS and the Apocalyptic Metaphor in North America: The New Religions Respond to a Plague (Univ of Toronto, 1996); co-editor (with Thomas Robbins) of Millenium, Messiahs and Mayhem: Contemporary Apocalyptic Movements (Routledge, 1997); and co-editor (with Charlotte Hardman) of Children in New Religions (Rutgers, 1999).

Michael Cheng-Teh Tai's 1984 thesis was published as In Search of Justice: The Development of the Social Teachings in Asian Churches.

Faye Wakeling (Ph.D. 1997), together with the Women's Collective of St. Columba House, published Hope is the Struggle in 1996. This collectively written book was later incorporated as part one of Dr. Wakeling's thesis.

## FACULTY ACTIVITIES

Since the last newsletter was published in the fall of 1998, we have received the sad news of the death of Charles Davis, Emeritus Professor of the Department of Religion, who died in his Edinburgh home in January, at the age of 75. His passing constitutes a great loss to the Department of Religion, to Concordia University, and to the Canadian academic community as a whole. Professor Davis came to Concordia in 1970, after founding the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alberta. During his 20 years of tenure at Concordia, he served as Chair of the Department of Religion (1971-79), principal of Lonergan University College (1978-91), published seven books and countless articles, and was a recipient of the prestigious Killam Research Fellowship (1981-83). Professor Davis, even for those of us who did not know him, has had a profound influence on the shape that the Department of Religion takes today, and has thereby touched all of us. We mourn his passing.

Very soon, you should hear the announcement of the appointment of the Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies...

As of June 1, there will be some reshuffling of faculty responsibilities, shifting of offices, and other sorts of movement. Michel Despland and T.S. Rukmani will officially return from sabbatical leave, and Norma Joseph will begin her sabbatical (Ira Robinson begins a half-year sabbatical leave in January 2000). Michael Oppenheim will step down from the position of Chair of the Department, to be replaced by Leslie Orr. (Michael and Leslie will be trading offices on June 1. Watch out!) Michael will take over as Graduate Program Director for the Judaic Studies M.A. program, and will share this responsibility for the History and Philosophy of Religion M.A. program with Michel Despland. Lynda Clarke will take up the task of being the Undergraduate Advisor. Two of our faculty members continue to serve the University in administrative functions—Jack Lightstone as Provost and Vice-Rector, Research, and Rosemary Drage Hale as Associate Dean of Graduate Studies.

Fred Bird was recently awarded two strategic research grants from SSHRC, as the director of two projects: one, for \$29,000, to hold two workshops and the other, for \$247,000, to direct a multi-university team of researchers. The focus of both projects is "Justice and the Practices of International Business in Developing Areas." In addition to his work on these projects, Fred will, over the next three years, will be serving as a co-director for an Ethics Module that is part of a new program called the McGill-McConnell Masters in Management, which will be offered to emergent leaders of national voluntary sector organizations in Canada. Other module co-directors come from the University of Victoria, Calgary University, McMaster's, York, and McGill. Among Fred's recent and forthcoming papers are: "The Judgment of God and the Practice of Ethics" for the annual meeting of the Society of Christian Ethics (January 1999); "Justice and International Best Practices in the Developing World" (with Dr. Terry Lituchi) and "Good Governance" for a workshop on Moral Leadership in Business at McGill in May; and a paper on "Global Ethics" for the annual meeting of the CSSR in June. Fred has been asked to serve on a task force for the Society of Christian Ethics to consider the role of the Society in the twenty-first century, and is also serving on a task force for Concordia University, examining the role of advertisements within the university.

Lynda Clarke has recently been awarded a Concordia University FRDP start-up grant for research on the "Introduction of Shii Law." This work includes treatment of both a series of classical texts, and the oral tradition behind the texts—which, Lynda is happy to report, will require her to do fieldwork in the religious academies of Iran and Iraq. She wants us to know that there is much exciting work to be done in Shii studies, and that more scholars are needed in this field. Lynda has organized a panel on "Shiism: Classical Themes and Modern Interpretations" for the European Association for Middle East Studies conference taking place in September in Ghent, Belgium. Her own paper will focus on re-interpretations of Jihad. Lynda reports that she has greatly enjoyed her first graduate teaching experience at Concordia, with the course on "Religion and Politics in Iran," and is musing on the possibility of a grad course in 2001 on Sufism. As much work has been done on Sufism and Hindu mysticism, as well as Sufism and Taoism, this would be a good opportunity for some comparative work and consideration of the theoretical material—is there interest out there in a course of this nature?

Rosemary Drage Hale reports the publication at the end of last year of An Illustrated Guide to World Religions, edited by Michael Coogan, Duncan Baird (distributed by Oxford University Press), to which she has contributed eighteen chapters on Christianity. Three more articles by Rosemary are appearing this spring: "Catherine of Siena" in Encyclopedia of the Renaissance, edited by Paul F. Grendler (Charles Scribner's Sons); "Rocking the Cradle:



Margaretha Ebner (Be)Holds the Divine" in The Performance of Ecstasy: New Approaches to Medieval Mysticism edited by Joanna Ziegler and Mary Suydam (St. Martin's Press); and a review article for the journal Signs (Spring 1999) of Women and Religion in the First Christian Centuries by Deborah F. Sawyer (NY: Routledge, 1996), Women and Religion in Medieval and Renaissance Italy, edited by Daniel Bornstein and Roberto Rusconi and translated by Margery J. Schnieder (University of Chicago Press, 1996), and Sisters in Arms: Catholic Nuns through Two Millennia by Jo Ann Kay McNamara (Harvard University Press, 1996). Among the conference papers she is presenting this year are: "Practicing Christianity: Performative Objects and Images" invited colloquium at McGill University, Faculty of Religious Studies (March 1999); "Ecstatic Mimesis: The Formative Function of Visual Images in Fourteenth-Century Dominican Cloisters" to be presented at the 34th International Congress on Medieval Studies, Kalamazoo (May 1999); and "Performance Theory and Ritual Efficacy: The Use and Function of Late Medieval Devotional Objects" presented to the University Art Association of Canada, University of Western Ontario (November 1998). As you can see, Rosemary is ruminating on the interaction of image, ritual, and religious experience. She continues as the co-chair of the History of Christianity Section for the American Academy of Religion.

Norma Joseph is looking forward to a year of sabbatical leave in 1999-2000. She has been asked to be the scholar-in-residence at the International Research Institute on Jewish Women at Brandeis University, where she will be pursuing her research on "Responsa, Rabbis, Gender, and Modernity." Norma will also be continuing research activities in Montreal and Israel. Among her recent publications are: "Hair Distractions: Women and Worship in the Responsa of Rabbi Moshe Feinstein" in Jewish Legal Writings by Women, ed. Micah Halperin and Hannah Safrai (Jerusalem: Urim Press, 1998); "A Feminist Scenario of the Jewish Future" in Creating the Jewish Future (Alta Mira Press, 1998); "Searching for a Woman's Voice in Responsa Literature" in Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies 16/4 (1998) 40-51. Works that are forthcoming and in preparation include: "Jewish Women of Canada" (to be published by the Institute on Jewish Women, Brandeis University); "Ritual Law and Praxis: Bat Mitsva Celebrations" (to be published by the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History, Temple University); "Gifts of Food-Female Givers: A Jewish Scenario" for Beyond the Given and the All Giving, ed. Morny Joy; articles on "Rabbi Moses Feinstein" and "Agunah" for The Reader's Guide to Judaism; "Listening to the Voice of Women" for Women of the Wall, ed. Rivka Haut and Phyllis Chessler (Brandeis University Press); "Responding to Mothers: Some Legal Considerations" (to appear in a special issue of Nashim, ed. Susan Sered); and "Annie Get Your Gun: Biblical Narrative as Legal Precedent" in Jewish Legal Writings by Women, vol. 2, ed. Micah Halperin and Hannah Safrai (Jerusalem: Urim Press). Norma also intends to prepare her dissertation for publication. Norma has been acting as the convener of the Chair in Canadian Jewish Studies, and is looking forward to passing on these responsibilities to the new Chair who is about to be appointed.

Sheila McDonough—who, although retired, continues to be associated with the Department as an adjunct professor—is having a busy spring. She chaired the session on "Muslim Identity" at the conference that took place at McGill in early April on "Islam and the Challenge of the New Millennium." In May, she will be giving a paper on "Muslim-Christian Encounter: Problems and Possibilities," and, at the Indonesian Conference at McGill, a paper on comparative fundamentalism. In June, Dr. McDonough will be giving a paper on "Iqbal's Contribution to Religious Studies" at the meeting of the Iqbal Society of Canada in Toronto.

Michael Oppenheim has had two essays on the modern Jewish philosopher Franz Rosenzweig recently published. The first, "The Halevi Book," is in Modern Judaism 19 (1999) and the other is the Foreword/ Introduction to the book Franz Rosenzweig: God, Man, and the World (Syracuse University Press), which is the first English translation of some of his later essays and lectures. In addition, an article by Michael on Soren Kierkegaard's Works of Love will soon appear in the volume of the International Kierkegaard Commentary dedicated to that book. Michael will be giving Temple Emmanuel's Rabbi Harry Joshua Stern Memorial Lecture on April 30, and is participating as a panelist at the 11th Symposium on Creativity, Psychopathology, and Adaptation sponsored by the Montreal General Hospital (April 24). In his current research, he is examining correlations between modern Jewish philosophy (Rosenzweig, Buber, Levinas) and post-Freudian psychoanalysis.

By the end of the summer we should see, at long last, the publication of Leslie Orr's Donors, Devotees and Daughters of God: Temple Women in Medieval Tamilnadu (NY: Oxford University Press/ University of Texas South Asia Research Series). Also slated to appear this summer are: "Women's Wealth and Worship: Female Patronage of Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism in Medieval Tamilnadu," in Faces of the Feminine in Ancient, Medieval, and Modern India, ed. Mandakranta Bose (NY: Oxford University Press) and a review essay of "Recent Studies of Hindu Goddesses" for Religious Studies Review. Among Leslie's recent and upcoming conference presentations are: "Mapping the Brahmanical Mandate: The Shifting Worlds of Brahman Activity and Authority in Medieval South India" presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Asian Studies, Boston (March 1999) and "Garlands, Lamps, and Drums: Temple Worship and Medieval South Indian Society" to be presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Asian Studies Society/ South Asia Council, Montreal (June 1999). This summer Leslie hopes to begin piecing together a book-length manuscript based on the research she has been doing on "Religious Authority and Leadership in Medieval Tamilnadu." She will also be writing a paper entitled "Image, Emblem, Actor: Women and the Gift in Medieval South India" for the volume Beyond the Given and the All Giving, edited by Morny Joy. Leslie received a research grant from the American Academy of Religion to support her investigation of "Religious Identities and Religious Communities: 'Hindu,' 'Jain,' 'Buddhist,' and 'Muslim' in Medieval Tamilnadu," and will make a brief research trip to India in the spring of 2000 in order to collect material for this project.

Ira Robinson will co-edit a volume of essays deriving from a colloquium entitled "Les relations judéo-québécoises: identités et perceptions mutuelles" which took place on March 25. He will be presenting a paper entitled "Recent Developments in Jewish Thought: the Field of Midrash" in the conference "At the Cutting Edge of Jewish Studies" to be held at McGill University May 9-10, 1999. He will present a paper entitled "Toward a History of Rabbinic Culture in Montreal: the Papers of Getsel Laxer" at the annual conference of the Association for Canadian Jewish Studies in Montreal June 6, 1999. Among his recent publications are: "Hasidic Hagiography and Jewish Modernity" in History and Memory: Jewish Perspectives, ed. Carlebach, Efron and Myers (Hanover and London: Brandeis University Press, 1998); "A Kabbalistic Reading/ Une lecture Kabhalistique" in Natural Disguise: Works/Oeuvres, 1973-1998 by Judy Garfin (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1998); and "Virtual Reality Comes to Canadian Jewry" in Jerusalem Letters/Viewpoints No. 389 (1998).